



News Release

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First Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Project in Southwest Celebrated

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is pleased to announce the designation of the first Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Project in the Southwest. The Service, along with its partners, Bernalillo County, Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, and the Mountain View Community Center celebrated the establishment of a “mini-refuge” community garden at the Mountain View Community Center in Albuquerque’s south valley. The garden will serve as a “mini-refuge” experience for local community members and students to help them better understand national wildlife refuges. As the garden becomes more developed over the next several years it will include a pollinator garden, nature explore classroom and educational and interpretive signage.

This project highlights the success of creative partnerships that engage urban audiences in conservation and is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s *Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative*. “This project brings together the Service, communities and partners to promote conservation” stated Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Manager Jennifer Owen-White, who spear-headed the project. “It really proves when we all work together we can do great things for our local communities and for conservation”.

Students from the Mountain View Community Center, with assistance from the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Youth Conservation Corps Crew, planted the new gardens. They are excited to watch their garden grow over the next several years and are looking forward to fun, hands-on learning experiences the “mini-refuge” will provide.

Two more Partnership projects are scheduled to be designated this summer, including a high school education program and implementing the adapted Audubon Birds of a Feather Curriculum for use on Valle De Oro National Wildlife Refuge by local elementary schools.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

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